

strument of "undisguised tyranny" from which very strong declarations it is apparent that the secret associations that have come to the knowledge of the Executive, are even more formidable in the apprehension of the Executive than the ominous aspects of the slavery question, with all its threatened and actual assaults upon the integrity of our national confederacy.

The House upon receiving the communication of these startling and important disclosures from the chief magistrate of the State hastened, to give them the attention due, as well to the high source from which they were made as to the intrinsic gravity of the peril they seemed to menace, and, at once, organized the select committee to investigate the facts, and to report such measures as in their judgment the emergency of the case might demand.

For the purpose of this investigation the committee was invested with extraordinary powers, appropriate to the nature of the inquiry submitted to them, and the danger of the crisis which the Executive had called upon the Legislature to avert. Besides conferring upon the committee the authority to send for persons and papers, the House also directed them to invite the aid of the Executive, and to request of the Governor such further information as his vigilance over the public safety, and his means of detecting the progress of these conspirators, might enable him to add to the important discoveries he had already made.

The committee promptly responding to the anxiety natural to the House, and to the people of the State, upon the reception of intelligence so unexpected and so full of cause for serious apprehension, lost no time in availing themselves of the privilege they were invited to use, by an application to the Governor for a more explicit disclosure of the character and proceedings of the secret societies to which his message alluded; they accordingly addressed a letter to him, through their chairman, respectfully soliciting his assistance to their proposed investigation, by imparting whatsoever he might be able to communicate as necessary for their guidance in the preliminaries of their inquiry. The committee were gratified to receive an immediate reply from the Governor, in which